

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims reflects all claim amendments and replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. In brief, claims 1, 3-6, 8-11, 13, 17-19, 21-24, 36, and 46-52 have been canceled, without prejudice; and new claims 53-90 have been added.

1 - 36 (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

a distal member configured to be secured to a distal mounting element mounted in a metacarpal bone;

a proximal member configured to be secured to a proximal mounting element mounted in the radius; and

a coupling connecting the proximal member and the distal member,

wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the fixator has a length and includes a flexible wire of substantially fixed length, wherein the flexible wire creates a flexible portion of the coupling, and wherein the flexible portion extends along a minor fraction of the length of the fixator.

38. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 37, wherein the coupling includes a ball and socket joint.

39. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 37, wherein the coupling includes a plurality of annular spacers disposed in engagement with one another on the flexible wire.

40. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 39, wherein the spacers are discrete.

41. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 39, wherein the flexible wire has an end, and wherein the spacers are removable from the flexible wire by sliding the spacers off the end.

42. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 37, wherein the flexible wire is formed of a nickel titanium alloy.

43. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 42, wherein the flexible wire is superelastic.

44. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 37, wherein the coupling is configured such that the vertical angle and the lateral angle between the proximal member and the distal member may be independently adjusted and then fixed.

45. (Previously Presented) The bone fixator of claim 37, wherein the minor fraction is about one-eighth.

46 - 52 (Canceled)

53. (New) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

at least one distal mounting element configured to be mounted in a metacarpal bone;

at least one proximal mounting element configured to be mounted in the radius;

a distal member, configured to secure the distal mounting element relative to the distal member;

a proximal member, configured to secure the proximal mounting element relative to the proximal member; and

a coupling connecting the proximal member and the distal member, wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the coupling includes a substantially linear, flexible wire that allows the coupling to flex at a plurality of positions along the wire, and wherein the coupling has a resiliency provided at least mostly by the wire, and wherein the coupling includes a ball and socket joint.

54. (New) The fixator of claim 53, wherein translation and flexion of the distal member relative to the proximal member are independently adjustable.

55. (New) The fixator of claim 53, wherein the coupling includes a superelastic portion and one or more rigidizing elements, wherein the rigidizing elements adjustably restrict at least one of translation and flexion of the distal member relative to the proximal member.

56. (New) The fixator of claim 53, wherein the rigidizing elements include a translation lock, configured adjustably to limit translation of the distal member relative to the superelastic portion.

57. (New) The fixator of claim 53, wherein the coupling includes a coupling bracket, and wherein the coupling bracket includes bracket arms that are independently adjustable.

58. (New) The fixator of claim 53, further comprising at least one reference marking configured to aid in setting at least one of the length, orientation, and flexibility of the fixator.

59. (New) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

at least one distal mounting element configured to be mounted in a metacarpal bone;

at least one proximal mounting element configured to be mounted in the radius;

a distal member, configured to secure the distal mounting element relative to the distal member;

a proximal member, configured to secure the proximal mounting element relative to the proximal member; and

a coupling configured to connect the proximal member and the distal member, wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the coupling has a resiliency that allows the coupling to respond resiliently to flexion, wherein the coupling has a permitted range of flexion that is adjustable without affecting the resiliency, and wherein the coupling is configured such that both the angle and the distance between the proximal member and the distal member may be adjusted independently and then fixed.

60. (New) The bone fixator of claim 59, wherein the coupling includes a flexible wire extending generally orthogonal to the distal mounting element of the distal member, and wherein the wire at least substantially provides the resiliency.

61. (New) The bone fixator of claim 59, wherein the coupling includes an elongate, flexible member and one or more rigidizing elements, and wherein the rigidizing elements adjustably restrict flexion of the flexible member.

62. (New) The bone fixator of claim 61, wherein the rigidizing elements include a coupling bracket configured to selectively restrict at least one of the flexion and rotation of the distal member relative to the proximal member.

63. (New) The bone fixator of claim 61, the flexible member including a wire, wherein the rigidizing elements include a plurality of annular spacers disposed in engagement with one another on the wire.

64. (New) The bone fixator of claim 59, wherein the coupling includes a wire formed of a nickel titanium alloy.

65. (New) The bone fixator of claim 59, wherein the coupling is configured such that the vertical angle and the lateral angle between the proximal member and the distal member may be independently adjusted and then fixed.

66. (New) The bone fixator of claim 59, wherein a permitted range of the flexion for a pair of opposing directions is adjustable independently for each direction.

67. (New) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

at least one distal mounting element configured to be mounted in a metacarpal bone;

at least one proximal mounting element configured to be mounted in the radius;

a distal member, configured to secure the distal mounting element relative to the distal member;

a proximal member, configured to secure the proximal mounting element relative to the proximal member; and

a coupling configured to connect the proximal member and the distal member, wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the coupling has a resiliency that allows the coupling to respond resiliently to flexion, wherein the coupling has a permitted range of flexion that is adjustable without affecting the resiliency, and wherein the coupling is configured such that the vertical angle and the lateral angle between the proximal member and the distal member may be independently adjusted and then fixed.

68. (New) The bone fixator of claim 67, wherein the coupling includes a flexible wire extending generally orthogonal to the distal mounting element of the distal member, and wherein the wire at least substantially provides the resiliency.

69. (New) The bone fixator of claim 67, wherein the coupling includes an elongate, flexible member and one or more rigidizing elements, and wherein the rigidizing elements adjustably restrict flexion of the flexible member.

70. (New) The bone fixator of claim 69, wherein the rigidizing elements include a coupling bracket configured to selectively restrict at least one of the flexion and rotation of the distal member relative to the proximal member.

71. (New) The bone fixator of claim 69, the flexible member including a wire, wherein the rigidizing elements include a plurality of annular spacers disposed in engagement with one another on the wire.

72. (New) The bone fixator of claim 67, wherein the coupling includes a wire formed of a nickel titanium alloy.

73. (New) The bone fixator of claim 67, wherein a permitted range of the flexion for a pair of opposing directions is adjustable independently for each direction.

74. (New) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

at least one distal mounting element configured to be mounted in a metacarpal bone;

at least one proximal mounting element configured to be mounted in the radius;

a distal member, configured to secure the distal mounting element relative to the distal member;

a proximal member, configured to secure the proximal mounting element relative to the proximal member; and

a coupling configured to connect the proximal member and the distal member, wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the coupling has a resiliency that allows the coupling to respond resiliently to flexion, wherein the coupling has a permitted range of flexion that is adjustable without affecting the resiliency, and wherein a permitted range of the flexion for a pair of opposing directions is adjustable independently for each direction.

75. (New) The bone fixator of claim 74, wherein the coupling includes a flexible wire extending generally orthogonal to the distal mounting element of the distal member, and wherein the wire at least substantially provides the resiliency.

76. (New) The bone fixator of claim 74, wherein the coupling includes an elongate, flexible member and one or more rigidizing elements, and wherein the rigidizing elements adjustably restrict flexion of the flexible member.

77. (New) The bone fixator of claim 76, wherein the rigidizing elements include a coupling bracket configured to selectively restrict at least one of the flexion and rotation of the distal member relative to the proximal member.

78. (New) The bone fixator of claim 76, the flexible member including a wire, wherein the rigidizing elements include a plurality of annular spacers disposed in engagement with one another on the wire.

79. (New) The bone fixator of claim 74, wherein the coupling includes a wire formed of a nickel titanium alloy.

80. (New) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

a distal member configured to be secured to a distal mounting element mounted in a metacarpal bone;

a proximal member configured to be secured to a proximal mounting element mounted in the radius; and

a coupling connecting the proximal member and the distal member,

wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the coupling includes an elongate member having a flexibility that allows the coupling to flex at a plurality of positions along the elongate member, and wherein the

coupling also includes a plurality of discrete annular spacers received on the elongate member and engaged with one another.

81. (New) The bone fixator of claim 80, wherein the elongate member has an end, and wherein the spacers are removable from the elongate member by sliding the spacers off the end.

82. (New) The bone fixator of claim 80, wherein the elongate member is formed of a nickel titanium alloy.

83. (New) The bone fixator of claim 80, wherein the elongate member is superelastic.

84. (New) The bone fixator of claim 80, wherein the coupling is configured such that the vertical angle and the lateral angle between the proximal member and the distal member may be independently adjusted and then fixed.

85. (New) The bone fixator of claim 80, further comprising at least one reference marking configured to aid in setting at least one of the length, orientation, and flexibility of the fixator.

86. (New) A bone fixator for repairing fractures and/or other dislocations of a distal radius and wrist, comprising:

a distal member configured to be secured to a distal mounting element mounted in a metacarpal bone;

a proximal member configured to be secured to a proximal mounting element mounted in the radius; and

a coupling connecting the proximal member and the distal member,

wherein the coupling is configured to permit immobilization, as well as adjustable flexion, rotation, and translation of the distal member relative to the proximal member, wherein the coupling includes an elongate member having a flexibility that allows the coupling to flex at a plurality of positions along the elongate member, wherein the coupling also includes a plurality of annular spacers received on the elongate member and engaged with one another, and wherein the coupling is configured such that the vertical angle and the lateral angle between the proximal member and the distal member may be independently adjusted and then fixed.

87. (New) The bone fixator of claim 86, wherein the elongate member has an end, and wherein the spacers are removable from the elongate member by sliding the spacers off the end.

88. (New) The bone fixator of claim 86, wherein the elongate member is formed of a nickel titanium alloy.

89. (New) The bone fixator of claim 86, wherein the elongate member is superelastic.

90. (New) The bone fixator of claim 86, further comprising at least one reference marking configured to aid in setting at least one of the length, orientation, and flexibility of the fixator.